United Nations S/PV.4219

Security Council

Fifty-fifth year

Provisional

4219th meeting

Friday, 10 November 2000, 3.30 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. van Walsum	(Netherlands)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Listre
	Bangladesh	Mr. Ahmed
	Canada	Mr. Heinbecker
	China	Mr. Wang Yingfan
	France	Mr. Levitte
	Jamaica	Miss Durrant
	Malaysia	Mr. Mohammad Kamal
	Mali	Mr. Ouane
	Namibia	Mrs. Ashipala-Musavyi
	Russian Federation	Mr. Karev
	Tunisia	Mr. Ayari
	Ukraine	Mr. Yel'chenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Jeremy Greenstock
	United States of America	Mr. Cunningham

Agenda

Briefing by Mrs. Sadako Ogata, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

00-74055 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.40 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Briefing by Mrs. Sadako Ogata, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council decides to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mrs. Sadako Ogata, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

It was so decided.

The President: I welcome Mrs. Ogata and invite her to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Mrs. Sadako Ogata, who has contributed so much to the worldwide protection of refugees and the resolution of the refugee problem since taking office in 1991.

I give the floor to Mrs. Ogata.

Mrs. Ogata: Thank you, Sir, for having invited me once more to brief the Security Council. In six weeks, after 10 years, I will leave office, so it is for the last time that I speak here today as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Therefore, rather than elaborate on specific regional crises, I will take this opportunity to give, perhaps, some food for thought, looking back at the experiences of the past turbulent decade and reflecting on the future of refugee work — in particular, on its relationship with this body, the most important forum where issues of peace and security are discussed and addressed.

I briefed the Security Council for the first time eight years ago. Since then, I have met with the Council quite often; if my records are accurate, this is my twelfth briefing. Over the years, refugee issues have also appeared on the agenda of the Council more regularly and frequently. This proves the obvious. The nature of contemporary wars, which is primarily internal and intercommunal; their intensity; and objectives — especially the brutal expulsion of communities from specific areas — mean that co today are inevitably the main cause of mass e Internal conflicts and refugee flows, in turn, become a threat to peace and security across bord many areas.

More than ever, refugees and wars inextricably linked. My first briefing to the C was in 1992, when the violent break-up of the Yugoslavia was displacing millions of people. less usual then than it is today that the representat a humanitarian agency should be asked to speak the Security Council, and it was the tragedy of cleansing which placed the United Nations re agency — whose mission is to serve people — centre of the political debate on peace and securit

Over the years, I have observed the int between the political and humanitarian spheres and evolve. I have not ceased calling for po support for humanitarian crises. I have rep countless times that humanitarian action can address — not resolve — political problems. I given much thought to the relationship be humanitarian and political bodies. Bridging th between the pressing, often dramatic interests most vulnerable and deprived people in the worl the legitimate concerns of States has been the c theme of my decade at the Office of the United N High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

My central question today is therefor following: What do refugees need from the Se Council? What does the United Nations refugee a expect from the body responsible for addressing and security problems in order to be able to ful core mission to provide effective protection to ref and find durable solutions to their problems?

I would like to elaborate on and make co proposals in two main areas: peace operation peace-building. Let me begin with peace operatio

As we have said many times, the nature o has changed, but the concept of peace operation still be based on the assumption that wars are f across clear-cut front lines. In spite of discussio wider approaches, peace operations continue country-based and to reflect neither the internal n regional nature of many of today's wars. The C will appreciate that we at UNHCR ask ourselves

questions as an agency dealing precisely with forced population movements across blurred conflict lines and across borders.

We deploy our own staff — unarmed humanitarian workers — to dangerous and isolated duty stations. They are increasingly targeted and — as in the terrible September incidents of Atambua and Macenta — attacked and brutally killed. The gap in time between the beginning of humanitarian activities and that of peace operations continues to widen. Last, but certainly not least, in many places, such as West Timor, Guinea and Liberia, forced population movements have become the cause and conduit of grave insecurity and instability and little is done to address the problem, as if we had learned nothing from the lessons of the former eastern Zaire.

This is a situation that worries me deeply. In most parts of the world where UNHCR and its humanitarian partners are called upon to operate, mechanisms to address security problems are slow-moving, unwieldy and not adapted to the new type of conflicts. In many places, they simply do not exist. Among my most vivid memories is the rescue operation that we set up in the former Zaire in 1996. When all deployment of international forces failed, our staff had to go and search for scattered, hungry and terrified refugees in the rainforest of that vast country, sometimes even on foot.

I am aware of the difficulties in political terms, in military terms and in terms of resources, but there are a few points that I would like to raise and a few suggestions that I would like to make in this respect.

Let me insist first of all on the need to initiate and implement peace operations much more rapidly. The issue of timing, frankly speaking, is one that has not yet been satisfactorily addressed by Governments. We know that peace operations will inevitably be slower than the humanitarian response. In refugee emergencies, UNHCR, other United Nations front-line agencies — especially the United Nations Children's Fund and the World Food Programme — the Red Cross movement and non-governmental organizations will continue to be the first on the ground. If there has to be complementarity in this endeavour, however, we must do all that we can to reduce the gap between the deployment of humanitarian personnel and the implementation of some security support measures. Otherwise, the cost is simply unbearable, as proven by the catastrophic consequences of inaction in the successive Great Lakes crises, for example, or by the recent murders in Indonesia and Guinea.

We at UNHCR have become used to being called to confront refugee emergencies literally at a few hours' notice. We have no choice; delays in our work inevitably mean that lives are lost. Since 1992, we have therefore progressively built systems to respond quickly to sudden, massive population movements. These systems are based essentially on the concept of stand-by resources that can be mobilized and sent to the field within 72 hours — staff, equipment, goods and money.

Since 1992, however, the environment has changed rapidly. Political pressure for quick solutions to refugee problems has increased and there is a growing number of humanitarian actors, including sometimes Government themselves. The Kosovo refugee crisis last year proved that we had to adapt our existing emergency response systems to a new and more crowded humanitarian space, and the area on which we are focusing in particular is to upgrade our surge capacity to address refugee emergencies at very short notice.

No matter how rapidly and effectively humanitarian agencies mobilize, however, their response will be inadequate unless the environment in which they operate is secure. I am speaking both of staff security and, from UNHCR's point of view, of the security of refugees and of the communities hosting them.

There is today an increased awareness that humanitarian agencies should not be left alone to confront difficult and dangerous situations. The question is: How do we ensure that? I have often spoken — also in this room — of the need to look at different options: not only full-fledged peacekeeping, but also and especially measures intended to support local law-enforcement capacity.

I insist on the word "support". That is the key concept, and it implies working together, as opposed to straightforward intervention. I am also referring to very specific situations, especially insecure border areas in and around refugee sites. And I am thinking of relatively simple measures: assisting the judiciary; training the police and the military; supporting the police with logistics and communication; and deploying, if necessary, liaison officers to work as

coordinators and advisors. We have some such programmes — and they are working reasonably well — in the area of western Tanzania hosting refugees from Burundi, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We need the Council's support for similar programmes in other critical spots: in Guinea, for example, whose Government has requested international cooperation in addressing security problems in the areas bordering Liberia and Sierra Leone.

The response of Governments to the concept of a ladder of options to improve local security in refugee-inhabited areas has been very positive, but it has remained, so far, in the realm of theory. It is urgent that we take steps to operationalize it, and to implement concrete, predictable measures, for example the deployment of humanitarian security staff. We need to know what contributions may be forthcoming in human, material and financial terms, and, again, how quickly they will be available.

I have insisted so far on intermediate security measures, because I know that in most situations peacekeeping is simply an unrealistic option. But I also believe that the transition that started with the end of the cold war has not yet ended, that new or renewed conflicts will flare up in different regions, and that the international community will have to maintain peace after very fragile ceasefire agreements are signed. Peacekeeping, therefore, will continue to remain necessary. But to remain relevant, it will have to adapt to the new environment and become much more effective.

We in the humanitarian community have welcomed the initiative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, on an in-depth review of peace operations. We have been among the most eager supporters of the report (S/2000/809) of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations chaired by Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, and are participating very actively in the discussions on its implementation. The report is very important and courageous in its attempt to discuss comprehensively and in a broader context how the United Nations can fulfil its key function of helping maintain peace and security.

But from a more specific operational humanitarian perspective, the report is also extremely relevant to UNHCR and its partners, particularly as it sets out a few objectives which, if achieved, would provide crucial support to humanitarian action. It stresses the need for quick decisions in responding to crises; it gives priority to quick fact-finding missions to the field; it underlines the importance of identifying and pursuing early solutions; and it places great emphasis on presence in the field. Those are crucial aspects of the report the importance of which UNHCR has advocated for years. They are also, by the way, basic elements of any humanitarian deployment. They clearly show the affinity, if I may call it so, between humanitarian action and peace operations, and the need to refine their relationship and mutual support.

UNHCR and other humanitarian agencies have large programmes in post-conflict areas, where peacekeeping is vital: think of Bosnia, Kosovo and East Timor, just to mention a few. Without peacekeepers, we could not have worked and could not continue to work effectively in those areas. On the other hand, I am pleased that, in discussions of the concept of preliminary assessments, the role that is played and can be played by field-based humanitarian agencies has been recognized. It is very important that these agencies are seen as complementary to peace operations, and not just as other actors who happen to work in the same areas. In my 1992 briefing to the Security Council, I said that humanitarian action was becoming dynamically linked to peacekeeping and peacemaking. We were then learning important lessons from our close cooperation with the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Bosnia. I am pleased that the United Nations is now finally trying to make this concept a concrete reality.

But speaking not only from a humanitarian but also from a refugee perspective, I would like to take this opportunity to go beyond the conclusions of the Brahimi Panel report. Look at West Africa, for example. There have been, as members know, cross-border attacks in both Guinea and Liberia in areas hosting refugees — and indeed because of the presence of refugees. Beyond Sierra Leone's borders, however, the only presence of the international community, amidst half a million refugees, is humanitarian, because the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) is, of course, limited to Sierra Leone. Yet, not only are humanitarian workers seriously at risk in border areas of Liberia and Guinea, but there is also a very real danger that the Sierra Leone conflict will spread, and that refugee flows will be one of the conduits of that propagation. The

conflict, in simple words, may become regional but the response, as I have said, continues to be country-based.

I understand of course that to expand peacekeeping beyond a country's borders presents many political hurdles and problems of resources. Sierra Leone is itself a good example of the difficulties encountered by a large operation in an area of relatively low strategic interest, with uncertain prospects and high risks. But the issue of insecurity spilling over across borders from countries in conflict and affecting in particular areas hosting refugees should be examined and factored into strategies for such operations.

West Africa is a case in point, but the matter is broader and particularly serious in Africa. The Burundi, Congo and Angola conflicts, for instance, pose similar problems. I would like to make a proposal. Could peacekeepers, in situations of refugee flows which might become carriers of instability, be given a special, cross-border observer mandate — in a word, to monitor areas hosting refugees beyond the borders of the country in which those peacekeepers operate? Refugee-hosting countries, of course, would have to agree, but that would be in their interest, because this expanded concept of peacekeeping could address some of their own concerns in terms of security and stability.

Had we had that form of support, say, in West Timor, maybe the events of last September could have been avoided. Such an arrangement would also have been useful in the former eastern Zaire in 1994 to 1996; perhaps some of the subsequent violence and instability could have been prevented.

Let me now turn to the second important area on which I want to focus: peace-building. For years we have been saying that unless more attention is devoted to the consolidation of institutions and communities after conflict, peace will not hold. UNHCR, of course, has a very special interest in this process because of its mission to ensure that refugees return home and settle down in safety and dignity. And we have had very difficult experiences in countries emerging from conflict, with large numbers of people returning and resources rapidly dwindling after emergencies have subsided, as in Rwanda, Liberia and Bosnia, just to mention a few examples.

Its focus on peace-building truly makes the Brahimi Panel report very complete. Once more, however, we should shift into operational mode and look at how we can be as comprehensive in action as we are on paper. I will speak, again, from the perspective of the United Nations refugee agency. Our problem, as I have said many times, is that we do not have the resources, or indeed the expertise, to run development programmes. And yet, development agencies are slow to come once emergencies have ended. There is a gap between emergency, short-term humanitarian activities and the implementation of medium-term to long-term development and reconstruction programmes. During that gap, societies can unravel again very easily, and conflicts can re-start.

I have personally made efforts to coordinate a joint initiative with two key international development partners of UNHCR — the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). This initiative, which was launched in January 1999 under the auspices of the Brookings Institution, has become known as the Brookings process.

We aimed in particular at filling the gap in funding and the gap in responsibilities and operations. In some countries we have initiated interesting and creative projects — for example with the World Bank in war-affected areas of Sri Lanka. In others, such as Sierra Leone, we have made proposals for pilot projects involving all three agencies. We are now examining opportunities elsewhere — Burundi, if a peace agreement is eventually implemented, would be a possibility. On our side, we have made great efforts, yet the response by Governments and organizations has been very timid, and raising funds for post-conflict activities remains a very difficult and uncertain exercise. I must tell the Council that I am disappointed by the limited response to our work in this area.

For us at UNHCR, peace-building is not an abstract concept. We see the concrete, sometimes desperate needs of returnees in devastated areas or in areas where communities continue to be deeply divided. We are doing our part to address these needs. In the 1980s, we initiated "quick impact projects" for emergency rehabilitation in areas of return. In some places, we were criticized for having gone beyond our mission, but in countries like Rwanda, for example, could we have afforded to withdraw when returnees still lived under plastic sheeting? When schools had no roofs, no books, no teachers?

We are now going farther and exploring new avenues, particularly in the promotion of community

coexistence as a first step towards reconciliation. We have launched a pilot project, in returnee areas of Rwanda and Bosnia, called Imagine Coexistence, consisting essentially of support to small, community-based inter-ethnic income-generating activities, around which we would like to build clusters of other activities branching off into the community — sports, theatre, culture, dialogue. This is one of the innovative approaches that we are taking. But its impact, once again, will be limited, unless there are more rapid and comprehensive efforts for peace-building at various levels.

One crucial issue which I would like to mention before concluding is that of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR). UNHCR is particularly anxious that effective DDR contributes to the creation of a safe environment for refugees returning home. Without any doubt, DDR is also one of the areas in which UNHCR expects more decisive action by the Security Council. In their great potential and in the obstacles which undermine them, DDR programmes reflect all the contradictions of peace-building.

I see two problems which need to be addressed in particular: first, the roles and responsibilities of all actors involved in DDR-related activities must be clarified; secondly, there must be a stronger focus on reintegration, because disarmed and demobilized soldiers, if they are not given opportunities for a future, will go back to more lucrative military activities. These are not small matters and, unless they are addressed seriously, little progress will be achieved in this important area.

The last 10 years have proved that, if they are not part of a comprehensive political and security approach, humanitarian workers face dangers, are less effective and even risk aggravating humanitarian crises. What we must establish, at different levels, are what we could call "security partnerships for refugees" — joint ventures between States hosting refugees, those ready to provide resources, and humanitarian organizations like UNHCR. In my briefing today, I have spoken of practical ways on how to promote such partnerships: by containing insecurity linked to refugee crises, improving peace operations and focusing more decisively on peace-building. Through security partnerships, together we can create a better security environment in which refugee protection and solutions can be more effective. This is an essential, if very complex, task.

My successor, High Commissioner-elect Ruud Lubbers, has the experience and the stature to carry it out with energy, courage and creativity. I trust that the Security Council will give him the same strong and constant support that I have enjoyed in this Chamber for the past 10 years — support for which I would like to express once more my deep personal gratitude. I do so also on behalf of my colleagues, and of all the uprooted people they so bravely work with in some of the most dangerous areas in the world. Please continue to help them.

The President: I thank Mrs. Ogata for her comprehensive and interesting briefing.

Mr. Cunningham (United States of America): As this is Mrs. Ogata's last briefing to the Security Council, I would like to begin by paying tribute to her for her leadership and commitment during the turbulent and difficult years of the 1990s. She so ably led her organization through the turmoil of northern Iraq, the Balkans, Rwanda, Timor and other crises. For her efforts she has earned our gratitude and for her commitment and her successes she has earned our deep respect.

In recent years, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has been called on as never before to take on enormous responsibilities in responding to the needs of so many refugees and others, including internal refugees, caught up in conflicts. We appreciate, as always, her thoughtful comments today on the huge challenges that continue to confront UNHCR, the Security Council and the United Nations as a whole.

We salute Mrs. Ogata for her courage in daring to challenge those who have sown conflict and are reluctant to make peace, those who continue to make it difficult for their citizens to go home, those who abuse the human rights of refugees or of their own people. She has taken a tough stance and has not been afraid to speak up on behalf of peace and reconciliation. She leaves a high standard, an example of courage, commitment and determination that paves the way for the future.

Mrs. Ogata has also tackled the issue of the internally displaced. UNHCR has defined its willingness to step up to the plate and respond where

asked to do so, as in the Balkans, Angola and Eritrea. I commend her for her efforts to try to redress the inequities that the internally displaced face in the international system.

UNHCR has indeed galvanized the international community to respond to the humanitarian imperatives of our time. But it is not an independent actor — it is an organization in which all Member States of the United Nations are stakeholders, and it is our collective task to ensure that UNHCR fulfils its mandate responsibilities to protect and provide durable solutions for refugees. To do this, UNHCR must prioritize and maximize the use of its resources. But it is the obligation of Member States to adequately fund UNHCR so that refugees may receive the standard of care and protection they deserve. We cannot hold UNHCR accountable if donors do not increase their generosity.

Perhaps most importantly, we need to move forward on addressing the security of both refugees and humanitarian personnel. It is not acceptable that humanitarian workers have become targets of conflicting parties seeking to politicize or disrupt humanitarian assistance. It is not acceptable that we do not have better mechanisms to reduce their vulnerability to attacks and intimidation, and it is not acceptable that humanitarian aid has been directed by warlords and corrupt Governments.

We have read the Secretary-General's report of 18 October on the security of United Nations personnel with interest, and welcome the upcoming debate on the recommendations. The recent loss of four UNHCR staff members in West Timor and in Guinea reminds us all that States are responsible for safeguarding the physical security and property of humanitarian workers. When any attack occurs, States must investigate and bring to justice those responsible.

The enormous contribution of refugee-hosting countries, the majority of which are in the developing world, is not sufficiently recognized and appreciated. The impact on their countries, their communities, their homes and their environment is immeasurable. It is time we collectively identified how we can better help them.

A final point: the United States remains concerned about the protection of vulnerable groups among refugees. In particular, the physical and sexual abuse of refugee women and children remains a widespread problem, especially when they have been forced to flee their homes without their husbands and fathers. During last month's Security Council meeting on women and peace and security, Secretary-General Kofi Annan urged the Security Council to do everything in its power to give women an equal voice with men on questions of peace and security. This includes protection as an important component in obtaining a broader humanitarian commitment to those who are most vulnerable in times of conflict. The Security Council reflected this concern last week, when it adopted its first resolution on women and peace and security.

I would like to conclude by saying that my Government warmly welcomes the choice of Ruud Lubbers as the new High Commissioner. His experience, his reputation and his commitment to global issues make him an excellent choice to carry forward the remarkable leadership of Mrs. Ogata.

Mr. Levitte (France) (*spoke in French*): I wish at the outset to pay a well-deserved tribute to Mrs. Ogata and to express our gratitude for her activities while heading the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). We pay tribute to her personal commitment to the service of refugees and her unflagging will to engage in constructive dialogue with all States, a dialogue illustrated by her presence at the Council table 12 times. We also hail her energy in leading her organization and in adapting it well to reality and current needs.

Unfortunately, the 1990s were a decade marked by considerable refugee flows, sometimes massive flows in very short periods. The UNHCR was sorely tested, but every time Mrs. Ogata demonstrated her determination and her tireless energy. Mrs. Ogata, you have provided the best possible image of the United Nations, and we thank you for having done so.

I shall not repeat matters in my statement to the General Assembly a few days ago on behalf of the European Union. I would like to restrict myself to a few comments on the subject Mrs. Ogata has just dealt with: the link between conflicts and refugees. That is the heart of the problem, which we must deal with in this Chamber.

More than ever, unfortunately, conflicts cannot be dealt with without dealing directly with the plight of refugees. The events in Rwanda, followed by those in the eastern part of the former Zaire, which we

discussed a few days ago, show the close and often deadly linkage between conflicts and refugees. Even more concerning, these events have shown the effects of failure to act, or of inappropriate action, on the part of the international community.

Several problems arise. Refugees not only fall victim to conflicts, but are sometimes used by the warring parties to pursue their political and military objectives. Two examples illustrate this phenomenon.

The first example is that fighters blend in with genuine civilian refugees to hide themselves and to use the refugees as shields, while the combatants pursue their armed activities. This is what happened in eastern Zaire between 1994 and 1997 with the ex-FAR and the *interahamwe*. These are particularly well-known cases. It is the duty of the international community to separate, as we say in French, the grain from the chaff. Otherwise, the refugees bear the cost of reprisals against the fighters, as was the case in a massive way in eastern Zaire.

There are several possibilities, including the intermediate solutions suggested several times by Mrs. Ogata, such as the establishment of observers or the use of international police. We would be very grateful to Mrs. Ogata for any additional comments she might make on the subject, which seems to us particularly important.

The second example is of fighters keeping refugees under their control to prevent stabilization of the situation and national reconciliation. They do this for political ends. Here, I think particularly of the situation in West Timor, where the pro-integration militia rule the refugee camps. It is up to the host country, with the international community's assistance if necessary, to prevent armed factions from using the refugees as their instruments, at the refugees' expense and at the expense of peace. The Security Council mission that has just left for Timor has no other objective than to assist the Indonesian authorities so that they can bring a rapid and final solution to this problem in West Timor.

In the light of these two observations, the issue of the location of refugee camps arises. It is a fundamental issue. The closer the camps are to borders, the more vulnerable they are to attacks and reprisals, and the more they can be manipulated by political-military factions. The refugee situation in Tanzania and Guinea today shows how drastic and serious these problems are.

Refugees are a very heavy burden on the host countries. Their presence can create or trigger destabilizing effects on ethnic balances or be a considerable drain on natural resources. We have seen this in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We see it now in Guinea and in the Congo (Brazzaville). I note in particular that the burden carried by Guinea is, in terms of the proportion of refugees to the total population, the heaviest in the entire African continent.

The international community has not sufficiently demonstrated, or quickly enough, its solidarity with the host countries. It is not really interested in their plight when the situation seriously deteriorates. Preventive action is essential. Unfortunately, all too often it is inadequate.

I will now address the return of refugees, which is an important criterion of the genuine success of a peace process and the return to normality. An example is the situation in the western Balkans. Progress has been made. Unfortunately, it is still highly inadequate. The number and pace of return of refugees, particularly to minority areas, remain below what we had hoped for. This shows that peaceful coexistence and the taking root of multi-ethnic democracy have not yet reached the point at which all refugees can return safely to their homes. Need we recall that there are still almost 500,000 Serb refugees in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia? The return of the Serb refugees to Kosovo, in particular, would certainly be a tangible sign of the durable abating of tensions and attainment of the entire international community's objective of building a peaceful, democratic and multi-ethnic Kosovo. Let us hope that the political changes in Belgrade will make it possible to speed up the return to normalcy in this region of Europe, which has been so badly battered.

My last comment relates to the safety of humanitarian personnel. Like Ambassador Cunningham, I should like to emphasize the importance that France attaches to this issue. Given the nature of the conflicts and the fact that refugees are turned into the instruments of conflict, all too often humanitarian personnel become targets, because humanitarian action is simply viewed by the belligerent parties as thwarting their political and military objectives. The murder of three staff members of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for

Refugees (UNHCR) in West Timor in September, and that of one UNHCR worker in Guinea, are a new and brutal illustration of this.

The international community's determination to oppose these crimes must be total. The guilty must by tracked down and punished by the local authorities, when they are willing and able, or by other, international means, which will include, in the future, the International Criminal Court.

Mr. Listre (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mrs. Ogata's leadership at the head of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) will come to an end in a few days' time. Her work has been crowned with success. Argentina would like to express its profound gratitude to her for all of her energy, dedication and skill and for the efficiency with which she has carried out this task. The quality of the work of UNHCR personnel is one of the greatest concrete benefits that the United Nations can offer to humanity today.

I should like to comment on a specific theme closely related to the protection of refugees. I refer to the security of humanitarian personnel — a subject with which Mrs. Ogata also dealt in her statement, and one that has been mentioned by the other speakers, especially the representatives of the United States and of France.

The work of UNHCR, like that of all those involved in carrying out international functions in the field, has always entailed risks — sometimes great risks. Unfortunately, at present these risks are greater than before, because those who provide humanitarian assistance are increasingly being identified as targets by warring factions in a large number of current conflicts. We continue to see United Nations personnel fall in the line of duty as they attempt to bring aid to those who need it. On 6 September last, three new victims from UNHCR were added to the long list of the fallen. We would like to pay tribute to those innocent victims and express our condolences to their families.

It is clear to us that providing adequate protection to United Nations and associated personnel is a priority. As one of the largest troop-contributing countries and a leader of the humanitarian aid initiative known as the "White Helmets", the Argentine Republic is very much involved in providing such protection. That is why Argentina invited members to hold an open debate on this question when we presided over the Security Council in February this year.

We support the immediate adoption of the transitional budgetary measures suggested by the Secretary-General in his recent report (A/55/494) on the security of United Nations personnel. Those measures aim to meet the most immediate needs to bolster the security of personnel of the United Nations system in the biennium 2000-2001. At the same time, we commit ourselves to giving due consideration to the proposals that the Secretary-General will present to establish a stable financial structure for the security of United Nations personnel starting in the biennium 2002-2003.

The report mentions the trust fund for the security of United Nations system personnel, which was created last year, and points out that, unfortunately, contributions have so far been meagre. Our country has made a commitment to contribute to this fund. We reiterate this commitment, and we urge other States to try to make contributions to the fund.

Another aspect that we must address, in parallel with the practical measures proposed, is the improvement of legal instruments for the security of personnel. The entry into force of the Rome Statute establishing the International Criminal Court, an instrument that my country will shortly ratify, will be a significant step forward for the defence of personnel.

Above all, it is essential to focus our attention on the 1994 Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel, which entered into force early last year, and now has 45 States parties. Our country supported the development of this instrument from its inception, because it is one of the principal norms for legal protection for personnel.

Efforts must urgently continue to ensure that those countries in which humanitarian or other assistance missions are being carried out respect the legal standards that are in full conformity with the 1994 Convention and do everything within their power to become parties to the Convention. The States Members of the United Nations must continue to work so that all mission personnel working in the field or carrying out humanitarian assistance tasks are fully protected.

The General Assembly has asked the Secretary-General to present a report on the legal situation of

United Nations and associated personnel and, in particular, to examine the scope of the application of the 1994 Convention and propose alternative measures to improve the coverage afforded by its provisions. We understand that the Secretary-General will present the report very soon, and we should like to thank him in advance for his work and the ideas that he will propose.

Our country will continue to honour our commitment to ensuring the protection of personnel. We will examine with an open mind all the proposals of the Secretary-General and work actively for the adoption of any measure that will prevent and prosecute any systematic aggressive acts against United Nations personnel, associated personnel and humanitarian personnel, such as those staff members of UNHCR who, unfortunately, suffered in the recent past.

Sir Jeremy Greenstock (United Kingdom): My delegation has listened very carefully to the briefing of this Council by the High Commissioner, and I pay a sincere and very warm tribute to the energetic way in which she has headed the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) over a very difficult period. Behind that tribute lies huge United Kingdom respect and admiration for the courage and selflessness of the whole UNHCR team, whose security, in particular, is of continuing concern to us.

Mrs. Ogata has presided over UNHCR through a decade of enormous change and growth, both in UNHCR itself and the United Nations system as a whole. Dealing with refugees has always attracted the highest public profile, and it is a sad fact of life that UNHCR is more likely to be blamed when things go wrong than given credit for a job well done against the odds.

The year 2000 marks the fiftieth anniversary of the creation of UNHCR. Its key aim of providing international protection to refugees remains as relevant now as it was in 1950. I think it is particularly fitting that we should be meeting under your presidency, Sir, when it is the Netherlands that provided the first, and has now provided the next, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

But the issue of internally displaced persons is now just as much in the spotlight. Internally displaced persons now outnumber traditional refugees. There is agreement that this is not an issue on which UNHCR should act as the lead agency, but we do look to it to play a prominent role in relieving the plight of internally displaced persons, who suffer as much as traditional refugees.

The United Kingdom welcomes the global consultations exercise on which the UNHCR has embarked, the aim of which is to revitalize the international protection regime and to discuss measures to ensure international protection for all who need it. As leading donors and supporters of UNHCR, we in the United Kingdom look forward to taking a full and constructive part in the next stages of the process, and we take careful note of the warnings Mrs. Ogata has given us today on the funding aspects of the whole process.

Sadly, this is Mrs. Ogata's last appearance before the Security Council. She has witnessed the steady expansion, in her time as High Commissioner, of the Council's humanitarian agenda. We are now finally tackling, perhaps, the challenges in the Brahimi report and, on a wider basis, those of coordinating peacekeeping, human rights and the humanitarian and development aspects of the United Nations work — challenges which she has constantly kept before our eyes and which she has again today enjoined us to address with energy.

I would just like to pick up a couple of points from her address to us today.

The first is West Africa and her focus on Sierra Leone and across the borders from Sierra Leone. We take very much to heart — as did the Security Council mission to the region — the security as well as the humanitarian aspects of that flow of refugees. We will look very closely at the proposal she has made — quite a brave proposal against the background of the traditional approach of the United Nations to peacekeeping, but one which we have to take seriously in this Council.

It is against that background that I would like to inform her, as well as colleagues on the Council who have not yet heard the news, that there is an agreement today between the Government of Sierra Leone and the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), signed in Abuja, for a ceasefire over the next 30 days, in which the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has played a leading part, as we enjoined it to do on our mission.

My delegation will pass out copies of this agreement to members of the Council — it is going by fax now. I would just point out to the Council that the ceasefire is for 30 days, and that it is agreed, among other things, that the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) should be deployed to the diamond areas, and that the two parties should immediately recommence the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programme, upon which Mrs. Ogata put her finger in a more general sense in her address to us this afternoon.

There is a further clause that ensures access for humanitarian agencies to refugees and displaced persons and to those who need humanitarian assistance, so it is an agreement which we have welcomed from London this afternoon. But we will have to look very carefully at its implementation, because we cannot yet trust the RUF to live up to all aspects of what has been agreed in this particular document.

The DDR aspects are what Mrs. Ogata has been talking to us about this afternoon and are extremely important. We endorse what she has said about a stronger focus on reintegration. We have seen this in Sierra Leone. We have seen the way in which it has not worked in other peacekeeping operations, and it is something we should return to not just in the Security Council but in other agencies and in other parts of the United Nations system. It is something to which the World Bank and other donors must pay close attention. There is no point in two Ds without the R, and it is the R that is particularly lacking in addressing the concerns which particularly affect UNHCR.

I conclude by again thanking Mrs. Ogata for her great achievements and wishing her well in her future.

Mr. Karev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): First of all, allow me to express our respect for, and gratitude to, Mrs. Ogata for her enormous contribution to the cause of the protection of refugees, for her many years of cooperation with our country, and for the assistance which the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), under her leadership, has been rendering Russia in the area of migration.

I wish to convey to her our sincere gratitude for those efforts and for the zeal which she has been demonstrating in resolving the most complex of issues. In her, the United Nations system and the international community have an example of an outstanding woman leader — a wise, staunch and humane individual. I hope that, even after she leaves the post of High Commissioner, she will continue, through her authority and influence, to exert a positive impact on that cause to which she has given 10 years of her life.

It has fallen to the lot of the UNHCR within this period to deal with such humanitarian crises, unprecedented in terms of scale and accompanied by a mass exodus of people, as those in the former Yugoslavia, in particular in Kosovo; western Africa; Afghanistan; East Timor; and many other places. Almost always, within the framework of what was possible, the UNHCR found adequate solutions. Moreover, in addition to doing the enormous amount of work necessary to eliminate the consequences of emergency humanitarian situations and to strengthen the regime of international protection of refugees, the UNHCR was able to take on the comprehensive and far-reaching questions of peace-building, post-conflict reconstruction, the stabilization of States and assistance to their long-term development, within the framework of the "Brookings Process".

A recent source of special satisfaction for us is the level of cooperation achieved between Russia and the UNHCR. The mutual understanding, trust and openness which have characterized relations between our country and the UNHCR have facilitated the implementation of even the most complex programmes. We should like to note the particular contribution of the UNHCR to the preparation and implementation of the decisions of the 1996 Geneva Regional Conference on problems of migration in the Commonwealth of Independent States. We hope that under a new leadership the problem of forced migration in the region of the Commonwealth of Independent States will remain one of the high-priority areas on the agenda of the UNHCR.

We agree with the assessment of the High Commissioner that the UNHCR, on the threshold of its fiftieth anniversary, is at a turning point. There are new challenges before us, and there is a need to find adequate answers to them. Here we welcome the initiative of the High Commissioner to organize global consultations in order to strengthen the regime of international protection and unswerving compliance with the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees.

Persons who genuinely need international support must be the focus of the joint efforts of States, international organizations and civil society. Naturally, each category of migrants, depending on their legal status, requires a specific approach.

At this turning point, the international community must focus on making maximum use of the existing potential, above all through an improved coordination of action between humanitarian agencies and by strengthening their interaction with the affected States. Moreover, here a prerequisite for international humanitarian activity must be strict compliance by all organizations with the fundamental principles of non-interference in internal affairs, neutrality, impartiality and humane action.

Our practice of cooperation with the UNHCR is a superb example of precisely such interaction. Attempts to cast doubt on these principles, to erode them through the use of new elements, no matter what supposedly humane considerations may motivate them, can lead only to the growth of mistrust and the emergence of additional problems.

We are doubly concerned by the alarming trend of increased deliberate attacks with the use of violence, including murder, on United Nations staff and associated personnel during the performance of their duties. Our delegation has expressed its sincere condolences on the deaths of UNHCR staff members during field operations during recent times. The question of security, of both the refugees themselves and of United Nations humanitarian personnel, must remain a focus of our attention.

In conclusion, we would like once again to emphasize our support for UNHCR and to express the hope that its new leadership will maintain continuity and will just as successfully continue to achieve the complex objectives facing that organization.

Miss Durrant (Jamaica): Allow me, on behalf of the Jamaican delegation, to thank the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Mrs. Sadako Ogata, for her very comprehensive briefing, in which she has certainly given us food for thought.

We wish to take this opportunity to commend Mrs. Ogata for her leadership of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and to recognize her unwavering commitment and service to the international community during a very complicated and often difficult decade in which the global population of concern to UNHCR has grown to some 22.3 million persons.

We have observed the humanitarian crises and the mass movements of populations in the former Yugoslav republics, in Kosovo, in the Great Lakes region of Africa, in West Africa, in the Horn of Africa, in East Timor and in Afghanistan, to name but a few. It is a tribute to Mrs. Ogata's leadership and part of her legacy that in all these tumultuous times UNHCR was there, faithfully executing its mandate in seeking to provide international protection to refugees and other persons of concern and in seeking permanent solutions by assisting Governments to facilitate voluntary repatriation and/or assimilation into new communities. It is in this context that I wish to congratulate the UNHCR in advance on its fiftieth anniversary.

My delegation recognizes that the task facing UNHCR is a mammoth one. As Mrs. Ogata has said on previous occasions, "Solutions to refugee problems take time." At this time, my delegation wishes to highlight a few areas to which the United Nations as a whole, and the Security Council in particular, must devote greater attention, with the ultimate aim of enhancing the effectiveness of the United Nations humanitarian activities.

First, we attach importance to the strengthening of UNHCR's emergency preparedness and response capability. As Mrs. Ogata has indicated, UNHCR is now focusing on upgrading its capacity to address refugee emergencies at short notice.

Secondly, we see the need for an intensification of efforts to guarantee the safety of humanitarian and associated personnel. Only recently we were saddened at the murders of three UNHCR staff in West Timor and another in Guinea. We maintain that if humanitarian personnel are unable to discharge their duties in an environment free from fear and intimidation, then their efforts will come to nought.

Thirdly, the 1994 Convention on the Protection of United Nations and Associated Personnel provides a backdrop for humanitarian work. While States have the primary responsibility to protect and provide for civilians in their territory and to ensure the safe, unimpeded access of humanitarian workers to civilians in need, the Security Council has a role to play in helping to create an environment for such assistance.

There must be collaboration on the ground between peacekeepers and humanitarian agencies.

We recognize also, as Mrs. Ogata pointed out, that security partnerships are important in order to create a better security environment, and we agree that this is an essential, if complex task. We will recall that the Council recognized the critical importance of the protection of humanitarian personnel during the debates that we held in February and March. The Council must now convert its words into action.

Fourthly, my delegation agrees, as Mrs. Ogata so aptly stated to the Council in its debate in January, that

> "humanitarian action alone will not be able to solve any of the problems leading to forced human displacement." (*S/PV.4089, p. 6*)

The Security Council therefore has a definitive role in preventing, containing and resolving conflicts. We agree that by taking firm positions and supporting decisively, rapidly and substantively the follow-up to peace agreements, and by promoting the mobilization of resources for reconstruction and peace-building, the Council will have made its contribution to averting and stemming humanitarian crises. We must work towards this goal or render ourselves incapable of discharging the mandate for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Fifthly, the United Nations system must work towards devising mechanisms to effectively and equitably address the protection of displaced populations, whether displaced within their own countries or as refugees. The international community must find a way to better help those countries that open their borders to vast numbers of refugees, often at tremendous economic and social costs.

Mrs. Ogata gave us a vivid example of the humanitarian situation in West Africa as a result of the Sierra Leone crisis, as well as the resulting humanitarian crisis. These have to be dealt with in a regional context. This was, as Sir Jeremy Greenstock pointed out, forcefully brought to the attention of the recent Security Council mission to West Africa.

Sixthly, the continued implementation of a targeted strategy for the advancement of refugee women and the mainstreaming of a gender equity perspective must remain a priority. We recognize the work being done to incorporate this in several key training packages and field guidelines. The priorities aimed at mainstreaming children's issues into UNHCR's overall protection and assistance activities, as well as increased emphasis on an inter-agency approach, require continued action within the context of the Council's activities related to children and armed conflict.

In addition, the formulated policy on older refugees, which was endorsed in February of this year, is particularly welcome, as is the project, Imagine Coexistence, which seeks to promote coexistence in divided communities. We have noted the pilot projects destined for Bosnia and Rwanda.

The point made by Mrs. Ogata regarding disarmament, demobilization and reintegration is an important one, and we agree that these programmes require effective action by the Council in collaboration with the humanitarian agencies.

The debate this afternoon must serve as a solid basis for the Security Council to intensify its cooperation and collaboration with UNHCR. We are faced with grim reminders as we witness humanitarian catastrophes, burgeoning crises and staggering human costs. Millions of people continue to be uprooted by conflict and are exposed to extreme hardship, violence and death. It is our collective responsibility to help them. We know that solutions are difficult, but we must be clear and decisive in our actions to help those affected.

In conclusion, I wish again, on behalf of my delegation, to thank Mrs. Ogata for her outstanding contribution and for the inspiration she has provided. We wish her every success in her future endeavours.

Mr. Ayari (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): I would like to welcome Mrs. Ogata, the High Commissioner for Refugees, and thank her for her exhaustive and instructive statement on the activities of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). I hope that the presence here of Mrs. Ogata, who has admirably served the refugees for long years, will contribute to even further raising the international community's awareness of the tragedy of refugees throughout the world and prompt it to undertake new efforts on their behalf

The tragic plight experienced by millions of refugees and displaced persons throughout the world is a source of great and constant concern and demands the attention of all of us — in particular since the problem

of refugees is expanding and becoming ever-more complex. The exodus of civilian populations stricken by conflicts can indeed seriously endanger peace and international security. Moreover, and in the light of its transborder nature, the problem of refugees has serious regional ramifications and is a threat to peace and stability for neighbouring countries affected by the displacement of refugees.

Tunisia, which adheres to the major international legal instruments on the protection of refugees — and in particular to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees — would like to express its solidarity regarding refugees and displaced persons, and in particular the most vulnerable of them, namely women, children and the elderly, who are often exploited by the warring parties.

We would also like to voice our appreciation of the role played by international organizations and the competent bodies and organs of the United Nations for the protection and assistance to refugees. In particular we would like to express our gratitude to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for the tireless efforts it has been making under the professional leadership of Mrs. Ogata to alleviate the refugee crisis. In this regard we subscribe to the proposal that has just been made by the High Commissioner in her statement.

While new emergency situations are continuing to arise, UNHCR finds itself confronted with a chronic lack of resources. Here we would like to emphasize the critical need for financing for humanitarian activities. The international community, and in particular the donor countries, must provide UNHCR appropriate political and material support to allow it to carry out its mandate effectively.

We welcome the fact that UNHCR has been able to organize the return of a great number of refugees. Relocating refugees in third countries and integrating them in the host countries are also solutions for many refugees. Here we would like to express our gratitude to those countries that have opened their doors to thousands of refugees in a spirit of solidarity and hospitality and that are continuing to grant protection, aid and assistance to these refugees. We urge the international community to come to the assistance of these host countries, in particular in Africa. These countries are themselves confronted with serious socio-economic problems as well as by pressures linked to the environment.

Tunisia remains convinced that a resolution of the problem of refugees and of the mass and forced displacement of populations lies in the elimination of their underlying causes. This means in particular the elimination of extreme poverty; rectifying the deterioration of the socio-economic situation in several regions of the world; and addressing the proliferation of deadly conflicts, internal and ethnic wars, and massive violations of human rights. In particular there is a need to work to eliminate the underlying causes of conflicts which are the source of the problem of refugees and of massive displacements of populations with their humanitarian consequences. It is then up to the international community to make the necessary political and financial efforts for post-conflict reconstruction.

International attention has often been focused on those humanitarian crises that are the most telegenic, while other crises that have taken place — particularly in Africa — have not benefited from similar attention.

The issue of refugees remains of great concern in Africa. Dealing responsibly with the humanitarian situation today represents a major challenge for the international community as a whole and in particular for the Africans. In this context we fully subscribe to the proposals as well as to the recommendations contained respectively in the reports of the Secretary-General and of the Working Group on the causes of conflict in Africa, and we urge the international community and the competent bodies of the United Nations system to assist in the implementation of these recommendations regarding measures to be undertaken to find adequate solutions to the problems of refugees, repatriated persons and displaced persons in Africa.

We believe, however, that humanitarian assistance and the carrying out of humanitarian assistance activities must absolutely abide by the principles of strict respect for the sovereignty of States, their political independence and their territorial integrity and of non-interference in the internal affairs of States, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and international humanitarian law.

Finally, I would like to conclude by reiterating to Mrs. Ogata our gratitude and our thanks for having succeeded in making the problem of refugees among the highest priorities of the international community. I

would also like to pay her a well-deserved tribute for the tremendous volume of work she has done for refugees during her tenure as the head of UNHCR, and to wish her every success in her future activities. I would also, finally, like to take this opportunity to renew our warm congratulations to her successor, Mr. Ruud Lubbers, and wish him all success in carrying out his mandate.

Mr. Ahmed (Bangladesh): Let me begin by extending the warmest welcome to Mrs. Sadako Ogata, who is in our midst, and paying a special tribute to her for her outstanding contribution to the cause of the protection of refugees worldwide. Over the past decade Mrs. Ogata has led the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) with exemplary commitment and determination. The global community is indeed indebted to you, Mrs. Ogata.

Bangladesh believes that the root causes of conflict need to be addressed in order to arrive at a permanent solution to the refugee problems that result from conflicts and that also contribute to the continuation and aggravation of conflict situations. We underline the need for taking into full account the special needs of refugee women, children, the elderly and the disabled. These groups constitute the overwhelming majority of those who are innocent victims of conflicts.

Bangladesh has always underscored the need for a balanced and shared response in dealing with global refugee situations. It is also important that equal attention be paid to all refugee situations and that the international response not be guided solely by the media spotlight.

My delegation strongly believes in reaching an international consensus on the need for burden-sharing with countries hosting refugee populations. It is a fact that developing countries continue to bear a lopsided share of global refugee caseloads. Often the countries hosting refugees are among the poorest. Many of them are in the process of post-conflict rebuilding. It is critical, therefore, that burden-sharing not be limited solely to the provision of direct assistance to refugees. It must also include assistance for host countries in dealing with the negative impacts of refugee inflows on the infrastructure, ecology and overall economy.

We would like to emphasize particularly that protracted refugee situations should not be relegated to the back burner. Such situations should continue to receive the attention of the international community, and UNHCR should remain fully engaged in dealing with those situations as well.

Given the complex nature of humanitarian situations, effective and coherent partnerships between UNHCR and the relevant United Nations agencies, intergovernmental organizations and civil society — including non-governmental organizations — are relevant to an integrated approach to achieving lasting solutions. UNHCR, an agency that is largely dependent of voluntary contributions, needs to be strengthened with consistent and adequate financial flows so it can meet the demands placed on it.

Finally, we would like to stress the need for putting in place necessary safeguards to strengthen the security and safety of humanitarian workers. The recent incidents in Guinea and East Timor do not augur well for our efforts to strengthen measures to accord such protection. The Council is urged to address its thoughts further on the matter.

Mr. Wang Yingfan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation wishes to express its appreciation to you, Sir, for arranging this meeting, and we wish to express our gratitude to Mrs. Ogata for the briefing.

In the past 10 years, in her capacity as High Commissioner for Refugees, Mrs. Ogata has made positive efforts for resolving refugee problems the world over. These have won her the highest acclaim from the international community. We wish to avail ourselves of this opportunity to express our gratitude for her contribution.

Mrs. Ogata has informed us in this briefing, as well as in previous ones, of the serious situation of refugees and internally displaced persons in different parts of the world. She has mentioned the need for protection of humanitarian personnel. In particular, she has noted the link between United Nations peacekeeping operations and the question of refugees, including the direct impact of refugees on countries in the regions concerned. This has also been duly noted by the Security Council mission to West Africa. Our consideration of the Brahimi report has also touched upon such issues.

Over recent years, the Security Council has adopted a number of resolutions and presidential statements on the protection of humanitarian personnel,

and, in particular, in January of this year it adopted a presidential statement on the protection of United Nations and related staff and humanitarian personnel. It is necessary for the Security Council, while striving to strengthen peacekeeping operations, to make a further study in greater depth on the strengthening of coordination among United Nations bodies in an integrated approach to security issues. The real solution, in a fundamental sense, of the refugee problems lies in the prevention and early settlement of disputes and conflicts. As the organ which has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, the Security Council has an unshirkable duty in this regard.

In the context of the Security Council, special mention must be made of African refugees. Over a long period of time, as a result of war and natural disasters, Africa has consistently been the continent with the greatest number of refugees and internally displaced persons. I wish to recall here that Mrs. Ogata gave a special briefing on African refugees to the Security Council; in response, many countries urged the international community to accord equal treatment to refugees in different parts of the world and to increase assistance to African refugees so as to help alleviate their very serious humanitarian situation at an early date. Let us all hope that the international community will continue to make efforts in this regard.

Mr. Heinbecker (Canada) *(spoke in French)*: Mrs. Ogata, my delegation welcomes this opportunity — unfortunately, for the last time — for the Security Council to engage in a substantive dialogue with you. We are grateful for your tireless and determined advocacy on behalf of refugees and other war-affected populations. You have spoken eloquently and thoughtfully of the challenges facing refugees and humanitarian organizations in countries which are on the Security Council's agenda — and of those countries which were not but perhaps should have been.

Each and every time you have briefed the Security Council, Mrs. Ogata, you have always been straightforward in your assessments. Like you, Madam High Commissioner, I am disappointed to say that, despite some significant successes over the last 10 years, in a great many instances durable solutions remain elusive for a large number of refugees.

(spoke in English)

We must express our gratitude to those States, such as, for example, Tanzania, Guinea, Iran and Pakistan, which continue to provide much needed refuge. While the parties to conflict which precipitated the initial displacement retain paramount responsibility, the Security Council has also been complicit, at times, in failing to engage fully in addressing the political dynamics of crises before they reached disastrous humanitarian proportions.

In recent months, some positive steps have been taken by the Security Council. We are trying to learn "the lessons learned". But, as noted by the High Commissioner, we can and must do better. As she pointed out, the implementation of recommendations of the Brahimi report will help. The Security Council is making excellent progress, I am happy to report, on this score, thanks to the Chairmanship of Ambassador Ward of Jamaica. The General Assembly must do no less. There will be no development without security.

Furthermore, as Member States, we must do a better job in facilitating the transition from conflict to development, nurturing both reconstruction and, as the High Commissioner has put it, "coexistence". I would welcome her views on how the Security Council might be more sensitive to these questions, particularly in the design of peace support mandates. In this regard, I took note with interest of her proposal that peacekeepers be given cross-border mandates in circumstances where refugees are endangered.

In praising High Commissioner Ogata's efforts, we also commend the work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) staff world wide. Their courage and commitment, increasingly at great risk to their lives, have enabled vulnerable populations to gain access to protection and material assistance. The safety of United Nations and other humanitarian personnel, and the environments in refugee camps, are priority issues for Canada and for all members of this Council. Canada welcomes High Commissioner Ogata's persistence in challenging the Security Council to deal with the question of refugee camp insecurity.

I would like to close by highlighting the interaction between humanitarian and military operations, as she has done. In the light of the recommendations of the Brahimi report, I would be most interested in the High Commissioner's assessment

of how the military can most effectively support humanitarian action.

Let me reiterate Canada's appreciation for the contribution Mrs. Sadako Ogata has made to the cause of refugees in these last 10 years, and to the search for international peace and security. Her courage, her perspicacity, her persistence and her humanity have set standards to which we all aspire. The world has been fortunate to have her service. We wish her all the best in her retirement from the Office of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, and we would ask her to pass on to her successor, Mr. Ruud Lubbers, the message that he can count on our support.

Mr. Mohammad Kamal (Malaysia): First and foremost, my delegation would like to thank Mrs. Sadako Ogata for her comprehensive, lucid and candid swan song briefing to the Council on the situation of refugees. My delegation has always benefited immensely from Mrs. Ogata's trenchant briefings, such as the one we heard this afternoon, and on other numerous occasions in this Council, particularly the most recent one, on 13 January 2000, on the refugee situation in Africa.

We are grateful for her overview on the refugee situation and concur with her perspicacious analysis of the problem, and we support her suggestions and proposals, such as those that we have just heard this afternoon on peace operations and peace-building. We hope this Council can act upon these proposals.

In this regard, Malaysia supports the strengthening of the emergency preparedness and response capacity of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to cope with refugee crises that need immediate action. We also support its efforts to create a secure environment for refugee-populated areas and humanitarian operations; among other things, there is a need for the refugees and combatants to be separated and the need to deploy international civilian monitors and police to ensure the safety and security of the refugees. The international community, too, must pay more attention to the critical post-conflict phase in which refugees need international assistance to resettle upon their return.

We agree with Mrs. Ogata that effective disarmament, demobilization and reintegration will contribute to the creation of a safe environment for refugees returning home. Hence, there is a need for the Council to look once again at the issue of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, which was first brought before the Council during Malaysia's presidency in July last year.

Like others before me, my delegation would like to pay a sincere tribute to Mrs. Ogata for her outstanding services, dedication and unstinting commitment over the past decade to the elevation of the plight of refugees throughout the world, be it in Africa, Asia or the Balkans. We deeply appreciate her enormous contribution to millions of the world's most unfortunate people. She and her staff have indeed become a beacon of hope for those people.

We share the Secretary-General's sentiments that we all owe an enormous debt to Mrs. Ogata and that we have all got so used to working with her that she will be very, very hard to replace. We wish her the very best, good health and success in her future endeavours. My delegation would like to take this opportunity also to congratulate Mrs. Ogata's successor, Mr. Ruud Lubbers, the former Prime Minister of the Netherlands, and to wish him all the best in his future challenging undertakings.

Finally, I should like to recall a statement made by Mr. Samuel Johnson way back in 1759, in which he said that "great works are performed not by strength, but by perseverance". That is how we would like to remember Mrs. Sadako Ogata.

Mr. Ouane (Mali) (*spoke in French*): I should like to associate myself with the unanimous tribute that has been paid to Mrs. Ogata, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, who has devoted herself profoundly to the cause of refugees, in particular in Africa, over the past 10 years. I take this opportunity to reiterate the gratitude of the Government of Mali to her for efforts to assist and ease the return and reintegration of refugees in northern Mali.

I should also like to thank Mrs. Ogata for her important statement containing useful recommendations, based on her 10 years' experience and which merit the Council's full attention. The topicality of her recommendations has given us food for thought about humanitarian action and related problems, in particular about the resources available to us to halt the deterioration of the situation of populations in crisis.

In this regard, I should like to make a few comments. First, we feel that Mrs. Ogata was quite

right, in the light of recent conflicts and their tragic humanitarian consequences — and I do not refer here solely to conflicts in Africa — to underscore the relationship between humanitarian assistance and the maintenance of peace and security. We concur with the Brahimi report that emergency situations must be dealt with expeditiously, appropriately and in a coordinated manner.

Secondly, we agree with Mrs. Ogata that we must stress the need to ensure coordination and consistency between humanitarian activities and the more general activities of the United Nations to ensure peace and development. Indeed, humanitarian assistance must always be integrated into broader international efforts to find political solutions and peaceful resolutions to conflicts.

Thirdly, as Mrs. Ogata stated, we must, in accordance with the Secretary-General's recommendations, consider how to ensure respect for and strengthen the legal bases and principles of humanitarian action. In this regard, we believe that we must address problems that threaten the safety of humanitarian personnel, in particular by implementing measures based on international humanitarian law that could also include education in democracy and human rights. Vigorous measures must be taken against those who deliberately attack humanitarian personnel.

It is also important that those who commit acts of aggression against humanitarian personnel and violate international humanitarian law be brought to justice. The International Criminal Court must carry out its task of ensuring that States, non-state actors and individuals be made to bear responsibility for their acts. My country has signed and ratified the Court's Statute and we urge other States to do likewise.

In conclusion, I should like to convey my best wishes to Mr. Ruud Lubbers, Mrs. Ogata's successor. We offer him our congratulations and full support as he carries out his assigned duties.

Mr. Yel'chenko (Ukraine): My delegation is pleased to see Mrs. Sadako Ogata addressing this Council once again, though sadly, for the last time.

I would like to express our gratitude to the High Commissioner for her briefing. Her statement reaffirms our conviction that the refugee problem is complex and urgent from a humanitarian standpoint and from the perspective of providing protection and that this problem can be solved only when Governments are committed and resources are available.

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) can carry out its mandate only if States fulfil their obligations. The backing of the international community, both in financial terms and in summoning up the political will, is essential for UNHCR to be able to address the causes of mass displacement, to provide international protection and to contribute to durable solutions to refugee problems and sustainable peace.

Mrs. Ogata once again highlighted the essential role of the Security Council in solving the problems leading to forced human displacements by taking a clear, strong and united position; by supporting more decisively, rapidly and substantively the follow-up to peace agreements; and by promoting the mobilization of resources for reconstruction and peace-building.

Her briefing was, as usual, thought-provoking and the proposals she made deserve serious study. For example, I think that the Security Council should take a serious look at the proposal with regard to an expanded concept of peacekeeping, as she put it, addressing in particular the problem of cross-border flows of refugees. As Ambassador Greenstock pointed out, the members of the Security Council mission to West Africa witnessed for themselves the acuteness of this problem.

We are convinced that States should work with UNHCR to adopt and improve the comprehensive approaches needed to address refugee crises by creating, inter alia, a stronger relationship between relevant actors of the humanitarian system, better linkages between humanitarian assistance and development cooperation, and an enhanced relationship between States, civil society and the refugees themselves.

It is also essential to create a secure environment for refugee-populated areas and for humanitarian operations. The tragic incidents last September involving UNHCR personnel in West Timor and in Guinea were painful reminders of the serious safety and security risks with which humanitarian workers must live. Ensuring the safety of humanitarian personnel surely falls within the solemn obligations of the international community, and of the Security Council in particular. As one of the initiators of the 1994 Convention on the Safety and Security of United

Nations and Associated Personnel, we could not agree more with the observations in that regard made by Ambassador Listre of Argentina.

These are all issues for future discussion and consideration, and for careful work. Now, as we speak, the Third Committee of the General Assembly is considering a number of important draft resolution on the questions of refugees, returnees and displaced persons, and on the activities of UNHCR. Among them are decisions on the fiftieth anniversary of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and on World Refugee Day.

My delegation takes this opportunity to commend the staff of the Office and their implementing partners for the competent, courageous and dedicated manner in which over the past 50 years they have discharged their responsibilities: to provide protection and assistance to refugees and other persons of concern and to promote lasting solutions to their problems. In their operations, people from UNHCR have helped a total of roughly 50 million refugees to salvage and restart their lives, in some cases paying with their own lives.

Our special sincere gratitude goes to Mrs. Sadako Ogata for her unrelenting efforts, throughout her tenure as High Commissioner for Refugees, to promote innovative humanitarian solutions to refugee problems in various part of the world and for her inspiring example in performing her functions. Her tenure coincided with one of the most turbulent periods in UNHCR's history and included such major emergencies as the aftermath of the Gulf war, the break-up of the former Yugoslavia, the African Great Lakes crisis, Kosovo, East Timor and many others.

We very much appreciate her courageous efforts, and we hope that her successor, Professor Ruud Lubbers, whose nomination we warmly welcome, will continue the important activities of the High Commissioner for Refugees in the same effective manner. I hope that he too will be a frequent guest of the Security Council.

Mrs. Ashipala-Musavyi (Namibia): I would like to thank Mrs. Ogata for her briefing. For 10 years, she and her staff have done magnificent work on behalf of millions of women, children and men who have lost their identities and are now known merely as refugees or internally displaced persons. We have witnessed an increase in the number of conflicts; as a result, the number of the people to whom I have referred has also increased. This was indeed a challenging period for Mrs. Ogata, but she met the challenge head-on. We applaud her tireless efforts and wish her the best in her future endeavours.

Those whom the staff of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) seek to help have become a weapon of war. Over the past months, deliberate attacks on humanitarian workers have occurred. It is thus essential to preserve a safe environment to enable humanitarian workers to reach those in need. In this regard, States must carry out their obligation to protect humanitarian personnel. Those who attack humanitarian personnel must be brought to justice.

Many factors have an impact on the situation of refugees and of humanitarian workers. The easy availability of the small arms and light weapons that fuel armed conflict is a major factor. It is therefore essential that arms-producing countries exercise restraint and ensure that the arms they produce do not reach the areas in question.

Without downplaying the severity of the situation of all refugees and internally displaced persons, I wish to place particular emphasis on the situation of women and girl refugees. That group of civilians have special needs that require special attention.

Despite the continuing efforts of UNHCR and other humanitarian agencies, the refugee population has not decreased.

My delegation notes that internally displaced persons do not necessarily draw the attention of the international community, but that their situation is just as critical as that of refugees.

It is imperative that we all work together to ensure that conflict does not occur. In that way, we avoid an increase in the number of the people about whom we are speaking today. We wish to emphasize the need for the international community to support post-conflict peace-building activities where conflicts have taken place, by assisting countries in their reconciliation and economic reconstruction efforts, which will ensure long-term security. In her briefing, Mrs. Ogata did a good job of discussing that issue.

We have noted the shortfall in funding for humanitarian activities, and we call on the donor community to provide the funding required to enable

UNHCR and other humanitarian agencies to bring relief to civilians in need.

In her briefing, Mrs. Ogata raised many important issues and made concrete proposals. I believe that those proposals are timely as the Council considers, inter alia, the report (S/2000/809) of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations chaired by Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, on which she also touched. My colleague from the United States delegation referred in his statement to Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security. In our view, the study to be undertaken in accordance with one provision of that resolution needs to take into account some of the issues that Mrs. Ogata raised today. For our part, we shall study Mrs. Ogata's briefing notes for maximal use in relevant forums.

When we were commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of UNHCR, Mrs. Ogata said, among other things, that there was really nothing to celebrate, because we do not need refugees or internally displaced persons in the first place. None the less, my delegation would like to thank Mrs. Ogata for having placed herself at the service of those who needed her. Her successor, High Commissioner-elect Ruud Lubbers, hails from a country — your country, Mr. President — with a long and outstanding record on humanitarian assistance. My delegation looks forward to working with him.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my national capacity.

As the representative of the Netherlands, I join all previous speakers in their praise of Mrs. Ogata. It is also in that connection that I wish to thank those speakers, including Mrs. Ogata herself, who spoke kind words about Ruud Lubbers, the High Commissioner-elect.

Mrs. Ogata has spoken in her briefing of the continually widening gap in time between the beginning of humanitarian activities and that of peace operations. She reminded us how, as a result, there were places in the world where unarmed humanitarian workers were on their own in dangerous and isolated duty stations.

The problem of the security of humanitarian workers, however, cannot be solved solely through the establishment of peace operations, no matter how successful we may be in streamlining that part of our work through the Brahimi exercise.

My delegation is of the view that all governments have a responsibility to provide a safe environment for humanitarian workers. That should be the first focus. Where effective authority is lacking, the international community has a duty to contribute to adequate security arrangements. That should be the second focus. In this regard I call on all Member States to follow our example and contribute to the Trust Fund for Security of United Nations personnel.

Owing to a lack of alternatives UNHCR has been forced to too often to continue its activities in the grey zone between humanitarian relief and structural assistance. Bridging that gap requires coordinated exit/entry strategies on the part of aid organizations, but also more flexible implementation of procedures and processes on the donor side. Our ultimate aim should be a fully integrated approach to conflict prevention, conflict resolution and post-conflict peace-building.

I now resume my function as President of the Council and I shall call on Mrs. Ogata to respond to the various comments and questions.

Mrs. Ogata (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees): I would like to start by thanking representatives for their very warm expressions of appreciation for the work that my Office has done, including myself. This is always a very encouraging recognition that I always try to pass on to my colleagues who are really spread out all over the world.

I am also pleased to note that some of the points I made in my briefing have been responded to with the promise that the Council will be looking into them further and also that there was some recognition that my comments will serve as food for thought.

I was particularly pleased to receive some response on the question of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) — a matter I would really like the Council to examine further and on which I have received assurances from several delegations — because we cannot take care of disarmament and demobilization. It is necessary to have police or military personnel to disarm people who are armed and we cannot do this. Even with funding from the World Bank for disarmament and demobilization, the persons who carry out this task would have to be people who know that they have to be

armed, so that they can disarm. It is on that basis that the next step of reintegration will require civil society involvement and the involvement of humanitarian and development agencies. We should be ready to take this on much more quickly, but I think that this division of responsibility is something on which I would like further clarification.

I do not think it will be possible for cross-border mandates for peace to take effect soon. However, I think that some of the delegations who have visited West Africa in particular, will have noted how impossible it is to contain fighting and to stop the fighting from moving across borders, and will understand the importance of trying to look at the border situation.

I am fully aware that no peacekeeping forces can be deployed along the entire 1,000 kilometre border of any country. But geography is a very important factor. There are points through which refugees flee and it is in those places, for example in Guinea it would be mainly in two areas — in the west in Forecariah and in the eastern part in the Gueckedou area — where the refugees have gone and I think these are the places where more focused observer missions might make a big difference, as has been seen in Zaire. That, then, is the thinking behind my plea , almost, to look at border areas, which would help not only refugees but prevent insecurity from spreading.

The third point is about the ladders of option. I have been talking about ladders of option for establishing the security of refugee settlements, as well as security for the humanitarian workers. I would like to emphasize that we should look first at the local level and at how local police and law enforcement capacity can be strengthened. This is where assistance to develop local capacity is the primary, preliminary step and then sometimes it becomes necessary to move on to regional or subregional arrangements. In this area many States are now helping in regional military training and so on. This is very welcome and then, at the very end, as a last resort, international help is forthcoming.

In my Office we have studied the ladders of option together with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and have constructed and strengthened our emergency services unit. We were concentrating on our own strengthening of emergency services so that I do not think that we have really contacted Governments that have offered to enter into partnership through various stand-by arrangements. But I think we have now identified areas where we clearly need stand-by arrangements and support and it is in this sense that we will be contacting Governments that have already expressed their readiness, whether in humanitarian security staff, logistic support or readiness of various kinds. We would like to come back to the Council much more systematically and I think we would be able to do that towards the end of the year. I hope we will get practical responses, because no organization should maintain, or can maintain, large standing capacity. It is really through stand-by arrangements that I think we will be able to be more effective. The timing gap is a problem and I agree that it is not just the peacekeepers or the humanitarian workers that can maintain stability. This is a very complex question, but I would still like to say that we need peacekeepers or observers to come in quickly.

I appreciated that several delegations noted the importance of funding and I did not mention funding here. I was referring more to peace and security management. However, peace and security, staff security, all require money and this is where I would like to appeal to the Council. We have arrived at the fourth quarter with a deficit. A shortfall of $140 million is foreseen, which means we really have to cut back. Whether it is in the refugee programmes or our own deployment of very important and necessary staff, we have to cut down.

For example, I was in Afghanistan recently. I would like to mention this serious situation, as the world's largest group of refugees is still the Afghans. Some 2.5 million have been in Pakistan and Iran for a long time, almost 20 years. The burden, as the delegate of Bangladesh mentioned, is very heavy on both the Governments and people of Pakistan and Iran. Yet, the situation inside Afghanistan is such that it is not so easy to promote return. However, in both countries I have seen Afghan refugees lining up, wanting to be helped to return.

There also I need resources. It is a small amount for an initial reintegration package that we would like to give them. Afghans are wonderful organizers of transport and they can manage the transportation, but we still have to have money to give them. With these funds there would be many more ready to go back. Of course, there are many other conditions, such as human rights, girls' and women's education, and so forth. But

people do want to go back. We know how we can organize this. I have talked with the authorities of Afghanistan too, but we need funds. This is what I wanted to add to our appeal, and perhaps from the peace and security point of view, you could also underscore the need for funds, if we are to have peace and security and the resolution of refugee problems.

I am very grateful for the opportunity you have given me and your assurance of continued support to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

The President: I thank Mrs. Ogata for the clarifications and answers she has provided.

As this has been Mrs. Ogata's last briefing to the Council, I should like to conclude by expressing our collective deep appreciation for all she has done to safeguard the rights and the well-being of refugees, and for the way that she has contributed through her work to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the maintenance of international peace and security, the development of friendly relations among nations and the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 5.45 p.m.